

# **AAC Civilian PM and Other Post-Utilization Taskforce**

## **Root Cause Issues**

As Updated in the Solution Analysis Process  
21 August 2002

### **Unclear and Inconsistent Mobility Expectations and Policy**

- Although the AAC mobility agreement is intended to address functional, organizational and geographic mobility, it is incorrectly seen by most civilians as a blank check for reassignment to a far distant land away from friends, family and community.
- With a few punitive exceptions, the AAC mobility agreement has never been enforced.
- A tremendous amount of energy has been expended to neutralize the impacts of retaining the mobility agreement to the point that it is most likely not enforceable.
- AAC leadership expectations relative to PCS are based on the military model with its institutionalized support structure. Without complete access to this support structure, the perceived expectations are unrealistic for civilian members of the AAC. A PM has enough to do taking over a program without having to re-establish a family in the civilian locality without full access to the support structure/sponsorship provided to the military.
- When an individual makes a geographical move to become a PM, there is no policy, procedure or assistance provided for spousal employment for the two wage-earner families.

### **Lack of Financial Incentives**

- Civilian pay options that could be used to incentivise civilians to want to be PMs, and to level the financial playing field between different geographic pay regions are not properly understood by the PMs or their supervisory chain. Implementation varies widely between individuals, organizations, and locations, and in some cases, pay adjustments have been denied with adverse/punitive impact on a civilian PM.
- There is no policy or guidance upon which potential PM applicants can build career/financial expectations.

### **No Career Path Beyond GS-15/NH-4/O-6 Level PM**

- Previous AAC marketing touted PM experience as a valuable asset for those whom aspire to SES positions. However, no Army SES announcement since 1992 has identified acquisition leadership experience of any type as a required or desired qualification for serving in any other Army senior acquisition leadership position.
- In an 18 Oct 2001 letter, Subject: Placement of Army Civilian Command Select List (CSL) Product/Project Managers (PMs) in DoD Acquisition Rotational Assignments, LTG Kern announced “a new program that will permit civilian Army PMs who are completing their PM assignments to serve in DoD acquisition organizations in order to gain valuable broadening experiences and contribute to DoD missions.” While DA has taken credit for creating new opportunities, the program has not been implemented.

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Rotational positions have not been established nor resourced, no central assignment management has been implemented, and no PM has rotated into a DoD Acquisition Rotational Assignment.

### **Improper Use of Permanent Assignments to Temporary/Term Positions**

- The policy of making permanent assignments to what are clearly term positions results in a loss of many of the personnel system protections that exist to provide a career safety net. These include return rights with save pay and a return PCS, and coverage under the Priority Placement System.
- The policy of designating positions as Product or Project Managers, without a “Supervisory” modifier precludes proper credit for supervisory time when experience is viewed for promotion opportunities outside the AAC.

### **Supervisory & Pre-Command Training**

- Project and Product Managers are supervisors. However, civilian personnel rules/policies limit supervisory training to individuals who are in supervisory positions, meaning that a newly promoted civilian PM who has never been a supervisor cannot get supervisory training until he/she assumes his/her PM duties. However, once in the job, there is little time to attend several weeks of new supervisor training.
- Civilian PMs receive no training on supervising and rating military and military PMs receive very little training on supervising and rating civilians.
- The DAU/DSMC refresher courses and the pre-command courses should be attended before a PM assumes his/her PM duties. However, under the current practices, this means that the individual must attend this training while still employed by the losing organization. Many losing organizations are unwilling to give up the individual for training and expect the individual to continue on the pre-PM job until the official release date. This means that these courses must often be taken after the individual assumes the PM duties. Often, they never get completed because the PM duties are too demanding to allow time for the training.

### **No Meaningful Civilian Career Model**

- The military has a very structured career model with well defined gates for promotion, command selection, etc. The model is well known by every officer and makes a well-understood framework for establishing career expectations and planning critical career events. While there is a civilian model, it provides no meaningful framework for civilians to establish career expectations and planning critical career events.
- Because there is no meaningful civilian career model, there is no career track that would allow centralized management of civilians in board selected positions with automatic file input to the next career level.
- The lack of a meaningful civilian career model causes board members to build word pictures that are focused only on the military model. This disadvantages

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civilian applicants because the critical career gates are different for civilians and military, (e.g., civilians advance through technical excellence and some demonstrated leadership, military advance through demonstrated leadership and some technical excellence.)

### **Selection Board Processes**

- Civilians in the acquisition workforce do not readily recognize the commonality between the board process and the traditional civilian merit promotion process.
- Civilians in the acquisition workforce have a misperception that general officers manipulate the board process to get their favorite officers into the “plum” jobs, leaving the dregs to the civilians.
- Civilian PMs lack an understanding of how they and their peers get selected to participate on a board.
- Information briefings to the boards do not adequately portray the differences between civilian and military career tracks and how to interpret civilian files.

### **SRPE**

- Allowing other than centrally selected AAC leaders complete SRPEs precludes any supervisory/management chain feedback to control the quality of “senior rater input. It requires individuals without personal knowledge of the individual’s work to provide career influencing input, often when the work done by the individual is not aligned with the mainstream mission of the “senior rater,” (e.g., ARDEC Directors inputting on engineers matrixed to a PM).
- Without profile management, all SRPE recipients are top block individuals, even when the narrative does not support the number.
- Senior raters for civilians are typically at a lower grade level than their military counterparts.

### **ACRB**

- The ACRB does not adequately display meaningful awards and training.
- Central-select civilian career events do not stand out, and are often overlooked in the review.
- Leadership time is limited to a yes/no field and not clearly/adequately captured. All leadership is not supervision.
- The ACRB contains duplicate, redundant and unused fields while omitting some meaningful data.

### **Inadequate and Inconsistent Administration of Benefits and Entitlements**

- Civilians in the AAC do not receive adequate instruction and counseling on their benefits and benefit choices in conjunction with their assignment to a PM position. The DA staff assumes that the local post activities, such as travel

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and personnel will do this. But many of the entitlements are negotiable with management or cross-functional lines making them outside the scope of support available at the losing organization.

- Bonuses, incentives, and many entitlements are not uniformly administered from individual to individual, PM position to PM position, or installation to installation. In many cases, clerks at local installations are making what should be senior AAC policy decisions, sometimes inconsistently from desk to desk.
- Travel entitlements for long term training are inconsistent from one installation/student to another and PCS versus long term reduced per diem TDY comparative assessments are not being done on a case by case basis as required by the JTR Volume II requirements.

### **Peer Socialization and Leadership Recognition**

- Once in the job, civilian PMs need the same opportunities for off-duty social interaction with their peers and superiors as is afforded to their military counterparts. The civilian PM does not participate on a level playing field with his/her military peers because institutional discriminatory practices prevent or exclude the civilian PM from participating in the routine social support structure of the military PMs and PEOs, (e.g., housing opportunities, wives club participation, and family activities).
- Being non-uniformed members of a uniformed community, civilian PMs do not receive the same level of visibility/recognition/acknowledgement from the AAC leadership as do their uniformed peers.

### **Inadequate Cross-Function Communication Within ASA(ALT)**

- Within what is now ASC, there has been no automatic coordination between the central selection process, the budgetary personnel responsible for cutting PCS orders for the slated individuals, and the execution of the required civilian personnel actions.
- There is no effective workforce planning coordination between the programmatic and the staffing sides of ASA(ALT). As a result, programs are killed and POM funding lines zeroed while PMs are being assigned to them.

### **Lack of Acquisition Requirements Accountability**

- The system is manipulated and waivers are being approved to allow personnel to by-pass the requirements for Corps membership.
- Failure to achieve required position certification level within required time frame has no career impact.
- Failure to earn the required CLPs in the specified period has no career impact.

### **Inadequate Leadership Commitment and Follow-Through**

- Senior leadership is not mentoring the civilian PMs

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- There is a cultural bias among some AAC officers that putting a civilian in a PM position destroyed the career of a brother/sister officer who should have had the position, but didn't get it because the position went to the civilian. This bias, while not universal, is extremely detrimental to the civilian PM when it is held by his/her superior, peers, or subordinates.
- There is a cultural bias among some senior AAC civilians that the applicants to the central selection process represent average and below average performers who want to "jump the system" and not the high performing individuals they must protect and help advance.
- If senior leadership believes in the value of civilian PMs, the policy of military only positions should be discontinued and all positions made best qualified, while retaining requirement for special technical characteristics such as flight rated. All the civilian only PM positions were made best qualified in 1998.